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THE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

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I. IN THE SCHOOL OF THE AMOEBA

I

The Master's method.—The Master taught the principles of eternal truth in the plain terms of things common to the life of His day. Since the days when Jesus walked and talked by Galilee and in the Temple court at Jerusalem, vast realms of knowledge have been opened to the intellect of man. Science has bared the truth of nature in a thousand new directions, and undreamed-of natural secrets have become the commonplaces of popular information. Were Jesus here today, it is reasonable to suppose that His teaching of that same everlasting truth would be carried by the vehicles of current thinking, and His parables would deal with railroad trains, engineering enterprises, and the marvels of modern science, revealing the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven as they lie thinly veiled beneath the surface of today's ordinary life.

The law of the soul-life.—The following pages attempt to indicate the wealth of parabolic teaching regarding the soul-life which lies in merely one phase of modern classified knowledge. It should not be supposed that the parallels here drawn are all mere analogies. Rather, as has been pointed out by Henry Drummond, we are able to trace fundamental laws which are familiar to us in the physical realm out and up into a higher spiritual sphere. It is as though the Great Artist in composing the wonderful symphony of creation had

carried the same theme throughout the various movements of His masterpiece, working it out in numberless variations and developing its beauty by exhibiting it in a thousand different settings.

A cure for materialism.—The scientific statements here given are purposely simplified so that those lacking scientific training need be at no loss, and also because the interpretation of one realm of truth in terms of another must proceed on general lines rather than by a too close pursuit of detail. The very definite parallelism that exists, however, may well suggest to the scientific mind which has been caught in the paralyzing grip of materialism that while these spiritual truths presented are not susceptible of the same kind of verification as is commonly sought by the mathematician or the physicist, nevertheless the manner in which spiritual truth fits the mold of physical verity with which he is familiar provides an almost overwhelming weight of presumptive evidence.

II

Gullivers in a Lilliputian world.—One of the compensations of the life of the physician is the use of the microscope and the opportunity of observing the myriad forms of minute life thus brought under observation. The achromatic lens snatches a whole world from oblivion, or rather sharpens our perception to such a degree that we become Gullivers in a

Lilliputian world and realize that we move clumsily among innumerable infinitesimal fellow-beings, which share with us in simple ways the very same functions and activities of life. We have learned in these latter days to conceive no little respect for these minute creatures, and a rueful realization of their far from despicable powers should render the wise willing to learn the lesson of the microscopic.

A master of general principles.—The protozoan is a master of general principles, and he who would solve great problems by reducing them to their simplest elements may well enter the school of the amoeba. The latter is a shy and elusive individual. It takes the practiced eye to discover him in his lair, but, having located the specimen, he will repay study. The amoeba may appear at first a perfectly round homogeneous cell, apparently motionless and lifeless.

The life-processes of the amoeba.—It takes something of the patience of an Isaac Walton to watch his life-processes, but a careful observation will demonstrate that after a time the cell is no longer perfectly round but grows lopsided. A protuberance develops upon one side, which gradually becomes accentuated until a new organ is formed and the cell has manufactured for itself a prehensile instrument capable of wide and varied uses. These new arms are called pseudopodia. They represent the cocoanut-acquiring missile of the anthropoid ape, the bow and arrow of the early hunter. They are the prototype of modern machinery. It is by means of these newly manufactured organs that the protozoan

carries on his life-processes. They may be ideally studied in connection with the simple white blood-cell, the leucocyte.

The beast of prey.—The simple cell has a personality which is readily comprehensible to the human, for his primitive instincts are identical with ours. Appetite asserts itself and he becomes a beast of prey. Out goes the new arm in the direction of any succulent morsel which he may fancy for breakfast. The edible particle is surrounded by the embrace of this wonderfully useful protuberance. The body of the cell has been described as flowing around it, and the meal is gathered into its internal economy to be accepted and assimilated or rejected, according as the tastes and requirements of the cell shall dictate. The pseudopodium becomes therefore the active agent of nutrition in the life of the protozoan. Its food supply and growth are dependent upon this newly manufactured limb.

The farther horizon.—Let it not be supposed that the life of the simple cell is absolutely devoid of variety. It apparently has its diminutive curiosity and speculation as to the farther horizon, and so we find it moving out in one direction or another, led perhaps by the desire for better hunting or fishing. The interesting thing about it, however, is that its means of locomotion prove to be those very same pseudopodia which formed such a convenient means of acquiring a breakfast, and the little creature is discovered pulling itself along the wall of its containing vessel by means of the contractions and expansions of its body. Whether the leucocyte experiences any sense of gratification from these gymnastics is a matter for

speculation, but certainly its life-functions are largely dependent upon them. So we discover that in the simple cell not only the function of nutrition but also motion is carried on by means of the new organs which instinct moves it to create as occasion requires.

Self-reproduction.—One would suppose that the activities already mentioned would very nearly exhaust the possibility of the simple cell's life-cycle, but there is still another function which is no less important than nutrition and motion, i.e., reproduction. The simple cell is rather the prototype than the imitator of the human being in seeking to reproduce itself. The process reduced absolutely to its simplest terms is a mere division of the cell-body, and that which had been one cell becomes two. It is a matter of no small interest to find reappearing at this point the ubiquitous pseudopodium, for the process of simple division whereby many cells reproduce themselves is carried on by means of the new arm which we have already discovered to be responsible for nutrition and motion. The protuberance from the side of the cell gradually accentuates itself until the tenuous ligament joining it to the parent-body finally becomes severed and the organ of initiative, adventure, and ministry embarks upon the highest adventure of all in the formation of a new cell.

A life-cycle.—This then is the life-cycle of the simple cell: nutrition, motion, reproduction. Food, exercise, rebirth—and the instinctive outreaching of its protoplasm as it springs to do the bidding of the dictates of life's urgings and necessities, twisting itself into new

forms and organs in the process, is the active agent of all.

The amoeba's message.—It is a far cry from the protozoan to the life of man, highly differentiated and developed through ages of experience; but in these days of confusion, when men's thinking is beclouded by the very multiplicity of life's developing phenomena, it is worth while to return to the simple general principles of animate life exemplified in the protozoan to see whether it has a message which will serve to clear the atmosphere and chart the terrain of a more complicated world.

III

The amoeba and the church member.—The instincts, feelings, and practices of the protozoan are illustrative of certain phases of the Christian life; likewise its illness and aberrations from the normal bear striking resemblance to the spiritual weakness and failure of great numbers of the members of the Christian church.

Healthy souls.—I am not pessimistic about the life of the church. I believe there are thousands upon thousands of healthy souls, the physiological processes of whose inner lives are proceeding normally and bearing right relations to the world in which they live. The progress of the kingdom work in the world is a demonstration of this, for one cannot have the fruits of living processes unless those processes are being carried on normally.

Invalids in the Christian home.—It cannot be denied, however, that there are many members within the church today who fail to function according to the norm of the life of Christ. They

are the invalids on the couches of the Christian home, the defectives whom we are carrying as a handicap in the midst of the world-battle. But this is the age of health. In the physical world we have entered upon an era when it is not only pleasant but fashionable to be healthy, and many of those invalid couches in our homes which were formerly occupied are now vacant, for we are learning the laws of life. Equally there is no good reason why our church should carry spiritual invalids. Let it become fashionable to enjoy robust spiritual health. It is per-

fectly possible to achieve a spiritual fitness analogous to the physical vigor presented by the modern athlete.

The physiology of the inner life.—A classification of those laws of spiritual health which parallel the normal physiological processes of the body and which may perhaps fitly be termed the physiology of the inner life should be helpful in leading us to a correct understanding of the basis of soul-health, and even the humble amoeba may be of some service in aiding us to comprehend those laws in their simplest form.

II. NUTRITION

The hungry amoeba.—The most basic of physiological processes, and one which is shared alike by primitive as well as highly developed forms of animal life, is the function of nutrition. The cycle of the nutritive function of the amoeba is simple. It grows hungry; appetite asserts itself, a felt need. There is a desire for satisfaction of the need. An outward urging in the granules of its protoplasm appears. The pseudopodium is thrust out, grasping the nutritive particle. The latter is absorbed into the body of the cell, resulting in its alimentation and growth.

The meal prepared by the Master.—Similarly the nutritive processes of the spiritual life are felt, expressed, and satisfied. Appetite is one of the first manifestations of life, and sooner or later, in every soul where spiritual life is present, hunger will appear. Even on the physical plane the Lord recognized the importance of hunger. What more touching picture is contained in the gospel narrative than that which presents Jesus standing on the seashore in the dim

gray of the morning beside the flickering fire, whereon His own glorified hands had laid fish that they might broil for the satisfaction of the physical hunger of those loved ones of His whom He had appointed to meet Him there?

Whetting the appetite.—So He has used the homely illustration of the appetite to speak of that attitude toward Himself which renders men capable of receiving the satisfaction which He Himself has provided for the needs of the spirit; and as the one perfect remedy for hunger and thirst is their satisfaction, so He has promised that the soul which cometh to Him shall never hunger, and the one which believeth on Him shall never thirst. He seems indeed to have drawn a happy distinction between hunger and appetite in indicating the permanent removal of the one, while the other is but whetted by communion with Him, as in the case of Mary, who sat at His feet and was commended for having chosen the better part.

Appetite an indication of life.—The lack of this primitive indication of life

is a signal of deadly danger. This is why the Lord spoke in positive terms of the blessedness of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. David expressed the same primitive need when he said, "My soul thirsteth for God." The appetite is there and is the best possible proof that life is present in the individual. Loss of appetite, whether it be in the amoeba or the church member, is a sign of fatal weakness which, if not promptly remedied, may eventuate in actual loss of life. It is a symptom and not a disease, but promptly robs both cell and man of their proper functions.

The aliment of the soul.—The proper aliment of the human soul is God and righteousness. Every time the soul reaches out toward the Highest and apprehends some new principle of truth or God, it becomes nourished and attains a stronger hold on life. The best apologetic for the Bible as the Word of God is that countless souls by feeding upon it have attained a robust spiritual existence. It could hardly be otherwise when every page is instinct with the divine life, and those thoughts which have nourished men's souls through the ages have here been crystallized and set down in living words and phrases forever.

Looking for a meal.—Appetite being present it is nothing less than a foregone conclusion that the individual who feels the pangs of hunger will reach out in the direction of the nutriment which will satisfy his primitive need. The outreaching is as instinctive and automatic in the spiritual life of man as in the protoplasm of the amoeba. Let there be the stirring of a spiritual

existence and the soul automatically seeks its natural aliment. "Oh that I knew where I might find Him." The soul itself recognizes that its satisfaction is to be found not in things but in a person, and it looks for the heavenly manna. No higher claim to a unique divinity was ever made by Christ than when He said, "For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55). "He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps. 107:9).

The right place to seek food.—But for a practical satisfaction of its appetite the soul must seek its food in the right direction. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork," but neither of them offers in plain terms the life and power of God as revealed in the life and words of His Son, so that the individual who presumes to seek the spirit's nutriment merely by communion with nature on Sunday automobile trips would be very likely to present a lean and hungry appearance, were it possible to photograph his spiritual physiognomy.

Sources of supply.—The natural sources of food supply for the human soul are three: first, the services of worship connected with the Christian church, which is the nursery of the soul, established by Christ, among other reasons for the purpose of throwing about the newborn the tender care needful for continued existence and growth; second, personal study of the book wherein is concentrated the great store of spiritual wealth garnered throughout the ages; and third, direct contact with the Source of all spiritual nutriment. In plain terms, the hunger of the soul will be

satisfied by attendance upon Christian worship, by study of the Scriptures, and by prayer and communion with Him who is the source of life.

Predigested pabulum.—The soul which presents the glow of spiritual health will seek its nutriment in all three directions. Our churches are filled with great numbers of spiritually underdeveloped souls who have failed to attain the capacity of going for themselves to the sources of supply to satisfy a growing appetite. They have formed the habit of coming to church, Sunday by Sunday, expecting to receive their week's rations, neglecting the duty of supplementing further their supplies of provender by foraging for themselves. They are content to remain spoon-fed infants, existing upon the predigested preparations of the Sunday sermon which formed the natural beginnings of their nutrition, but which, if persisted in to the exclusion of a more robust diet gathered for themselves, is bound to give rise to a condition of malnutrition and arrested development.

Tenement children.—There is perhaps nothing more pitiful in the physical realm than those little undersized, wizened denizens of the crowded tenement districts of our great cities—children with large heads, hollow eyes, protruding abdomens, and attenuated limbs: children whose physical appearance cries aloud of imperfect or insufficient feeding. The careless, haphazard feeding of the tenements will never develop in the childish frame the winsome curves and wholesome color of healthy childhood, and when these unsanitary conditions have so affected the growth of the child that the illy

nourished brain ceases development, and the intellect, which should be putting forth vigorous promise for the future, remains in a partially developed state, the condition is pitiable indeed.

Arrested development.—Arrested development in the spiritual life is, however, one of the commonest phenomena found in the Christian church. Lives which in the first happiness of a new spiritual experience have given promise of a maturer development of broad usefulness present in a spiritual sense all the symptoms of the gutter child, whose physical development is stunted as a result of insufficient food.

Meat for the soul.—In these cases the cause is a similar one and the remedy identical. No vigorous, healthy, spiritual growth can be hoped for apart from earnest and persistent study of the Word of God. In the truest sense, the book which we call the Bible is meat for the soul. It contains the highest possible exposition of the great principles of moral and spiritual growth, and the soul that constantly receives and meditates upon the truths thus revealed absorbs them into his spiritual consciousness. The principles of the Word are sown in the soil of the conscious mind; they penetrate to the subconscious; there they germinate and govern the trend of all subsequent thinking.

Spiritual digestion.—The "stuff" of the living Word is spiritual nutriment. It becomes assimilated by the digestive apparatus of the soul, passes into the circulation, and appears again as the substance of which the character is built and the energy wherewith life's activities are manifested.

Stunted spirits.—Rob the spirit of its natural food and every physical symptom of arrested development is paralleled in the spiritual life. The soul becomes mean and undersized. Its characteristics are small and feeble instead of generous and vigorous. The character of the individual is rendered repulsive rather than winsome and genial.

Learning how to feed.—But the soul must be taught to feed upon the Word. The situation is similar to that found in the physical realm. Artificial feeding is natural for a time, but only until the time comes when the robust child learns to feed itself. The average new convert does not know how to study the Bible. He needs constant help from those who are older. We ought not to expect this situation to continue, however. He should learn to use his imagination, to grasp the great needs of life and find the correlative truth between the covers of the Book. He should learn to interpret the Word in terms of an answer to his own need. It would be an excellent thing if every Christian upon uniting with the church were placed in a small Bible-study group—not the ordinary Sunday-school class, but a group limited in number, meeting for earnest study and frank discussion, with the express purpose of relating the Word to the phenomena of life.

The right way to use the Bible.—There is a marked difference between the individual who has learned to use his Bible intelligently, and the one who has received no such training. The latter finds no appetite for it, while to the former its pages are instinct with life. To the one it is a mere collection of words, set down ages ago by men whose

lives were utterly unrelated to his own, while the other colors its pages with the kaleidoscopic hues of his own varying experience. The difference between the two is that one reads it dully and formally, while the other interprets it by using his imagination to fit the eternal principle to his present need.

The pseudopodium of the soul.—The imagination is the organ whereby the nutriment of the Word is extracted. It is the pseudopodium of the soul. Its application to the pages of the Scriptures will make the old, familiar stories live again.

Peter in prison.—We have read the account of Peter in prison repeatedly, and it has made little impression on us. Read it again and think of Peter lying asleep with the chains about his ankles and wrists chafing raw places in the skin. Think of the two soldiers by his side, stirred by his every motion, sentinels alert to prevent escape. Now think whether there is no Peter in your own soul chained by habit which chafes and injures the spirit-life. Think whether the spirit within has not struggled against its fetters until weariness has caused it to cease the apparently useless strife and fling itself in torpor to quiescence between its captors. Imagine then the heavenly vision of One who stands by us in the prison cell of our own soul's captivity and, speaking the word of power, causes us to arise, and lo, we find ourselves upon our feet with the chains gone and the guards overpowered by a higher force, while we pursue the angel form to the streets of the great city where service awaits us.

Thus Peter's story becomes fiber to the soul; we apprehend it for ourselves;

it passes into the realm of the subconscious, where the processes of mental and spiritual digestion take place, and then it emerges in moral muscles, girt for the task and ready to function normally in the spiritual frame.

Spiritual initiative.—It takes spiritual initiative to project one's own life into the printed page and emerge with the prey clasped in one's grasp. One is reminded of the wheeling gulls, poising themselves above the spray of the ocean surf, their sharp eyes fixed upon the surface of the water, alert to dart through the sparkling drops and seize upon whatever edible morsel their penetrating vision may discern, shaking the foam from their wings as they rise exultant, clutching their prey in their talons. Many of the most stimulating and helpful thoughts of the Bible are veiled from the casual glance by the archaic language of the ordinary version, and no one can truly interpret its message until the need of his soul shall drive him to an earnest search for that satisfying nutriment which he lacks.

Loss of appetite.—Anorexia, or loss of appetite, is found in the individual cell, as well as in the organism as a whole. There are certain cells in the human body whose function is to combat the hordes of invading bacteria which cause disease. This they do by actually swallowing them up, digesting, and disposing of them. In certain morbid states these cells lose their appetite and fail to attack the enemy, thus leaving the body a prey to the inroads of disease.

Opsonins.—The appetite of these cells is stimulated, however, by certain principles in the blood called opsonins.

If the opsonins are not present in force, the cells will perform but feebly their functions. Loss of appetite is as common a symptom in the spiritual as in the physical realm. We need to develop the opsonins within our souls by deliberately breaking with the insidious sloth which bids us be satisfied with the commonplaces of the Christian life, when spiritual initiative and the determined use of the imagination will place at our command the rich stores of spiritual nutriment contained in the Word. It requires a definite effort to grasp the hidden meanings of the Scriptures, but this effort having been faithfully put forth will build within us that spiritual tissue which shall clothe the skeleton of our meager souls with muscles capable of moral wrestling and constructive activity.

The miracle of Christ's feeding.—The normal soul will find its aliment in public worship and in personal study of that volume which is the great source of all spiritual strength, but there is one other source of spiritual nutrition which must not be neglected, and that is personal communion with Him who is the Bread of Life. God speaks His words which are spirit and life to our souls by means of the message from another, and by means of the printed page, but also by that direct personal impression which comes to every soul which is willing to put itself into the place where the One who fed the five thousand can work again the miracle of the loaves and fishes and nourish our own souls.

Personal communion, however, follows the lines of thought leading out from the Word. The Christian who consecrates his imagination to the under-

standing of God and His Word will go far toward a sympathetic interpretation of the eternal principles of the life of God in the colloquial of commonplace human life. He will be led out into the depths of comprehension of the Almighty so that the inner paths of thought and communion which ramify through the depths of every man's spirit become luminous with the joy-giving radiance of the Master's presence, and he will know the peace and poignant satisfaction of a heart whose inmost motives are continually governed and directed by the Lord of all hearts. He will find also that these channels of "union and communion" with God radiate from those great thoughts which have been crystallized for us in the Book. So that, after all,

the three sources of the soul's alimentation—the spoken word in public worship, the written word in private Bible study, and the direct contact of our spirit with the Holy Spirit of God—have their focus in the revealed Word.

Steps in the soul's feeding.—It is worth while to remember the steps which will insure a normal alimentation of the soul: A good appetite, preserved by putting ourselves in the way of its satisfaction. The outreach of the imagination, the pseudopodium of the soul, in the direction of the three sources of food supply—the ministry of the Word in public worship, the private appropriation of the Bible as our own proper nutriment, and direct contact with the Interpreter and Revealer of all truth.

III. MOTION

Motion dependent upon nutrition.—The second function of the protozoan is motion. It is dependent absolutely upon nutrition. While the immediate result of unsatisfied hunger is likely to be energetic activity, nevertheless, if nutrition fails beyond a brief time the activity ceases, the motions become sluggish and finally disappear, leading to a condition of coma resulting in death and ultimate dissolution.

The weakness of hunger.—In the human system the weakness of prolonged hunger is sometimes pathetic. The mental processes may be abnormally quickened, leading to a ready grasp of the necessity for action, but the weakness of the system from continued starvation renders the muscles incapable of accomplishing the bidding of the brain. The life becomes futile, pro-

found discouragement results, which gradually obtunds the brain, dulls the spirit, and leads to a breakdown of all the body-processes.

Telegraphing for supplies.—Just as the chemical reaction in every granule of the protoplasm of the simple cell sets up an imperative call for the needed additions of tissue-building material, so the cells of the human body echo the cry and telegraph frantically to headquarters for supplies. Foraging bands of cells are sent out, and if nutriment is not forthcoming from the proper source they may feed upon the surplus store of adipose tissue found in the system itself.

Food and energy.—When the response has been obtained and the foraging bands have returned to camp with abundant quantities of the needed ration,

satisfying the clamant voices of the hungry troop, the natural outcome of satisfied appetite is to convert the nutriment into tissue and energy. The amoeba, whose appetite has been satisfied, grows rotund and waves active arms in moving from one place to another. The human system which has been supplied with food assimilates the nutriment and by means of it covers its bony framework with fat and muscle, and manufactures stores of energy which lead to multifarious activities. The replenished army commissary means a forward movement upon the enemies' intrenchments.

Hungry souls cannot work.—So in the spirit-life the physiology of the amoeba and of the human frame is faithfully reproduced: activity depends entirely upon nutrition. There will be no motion without food and no service without the foregoing satisfaction of spiritual appetite. Is not the complaint too frequently heard, "I come away from the services hungry and dissatisfied"? Let it be well noted that the hungry and dissatisfied soul never yet produced activities of value in the church life. What an emphatic call to ministers is this, to base their public ministry upon the true aliment of the soul prepared and waiting in the Book of God. Similarly there is a hint to such dependent souls to realize that they may go to the source of supply and "buy for themselves."

Regular meals.—But having received the needful food, whether through public worship, private study, or direct communion—or ideally through all three—there comes the natural corollary of nutrition, which is activity, expressed

in the amoeba by motion. There is no more edifying and inspiring phenomenon in the world than that of a normal Christian functioning healthily and happily in the spiritual body of the church, taking his meals regularly at the Sunday services and prayer meeting, foraging for himself among the rich pastures of the Word, apprehending the divine life by living communion with the source of life, and then, having digested and assimilated the food provided, elaborating it in the chemical laboratory of the inner life into tissue for the upbuilding of character and energy for the activities of the spirit-life.

Digesting the meal.—There is a shadowy realm within the spirit of man whence arise intuitions and impulses, sudden convictions that we ought to take a certain course of action, as well as deliberate purposes arising out of long consideration and carefully balanced judgments. This dim labyrinth of the inner life is but just beginning to be explored by the new psychology. Its laws are being formulated, its paths mapped, and in some cases its derangements corrected. But this realm of the inner spirit has never been wholly obscure to the Christian soul. It is the region of spiritual digestion. The soul apprehends a new spiritual truth; it becomes food for the inner life. The new idea falls into the region of the subconscious and is acted upon and reacted upon by the digestive ferments of the spirit until it becomes fitted for absorption in the life of the soul.

Building the tissue of the soul.—In its transformed state it then goes to build up the tenuous but tenacious tissue of the soul and appears in developed char-

acter, so that, when the occasion arises, that very same spiritual idea through the medium of intuition or impulse will suddenly appear as high and noble action elicited by some great emergency of life; or perchance, having been wrought into the warp and woof of the soul, will appear as a new habit of godlike tenderness or grace in the active relations of the individual with others.

The bread line.—There is a statement in the Word to the effect that "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." A much commoner phenomenon in the life of the church is for its member to wax fat and stop kicking. An entirely false conception of the function of the church seems to have been abroad. This erroneous view has been expressed in the traditional call of the church to the unconverted. The invitation has been to a well-spread table, "Come and be filled," "Come and receive salvation," whereas the actual call of the Master is not to the bread line but to the battle front.

The battle front.—The commissary department is not the element of prime importance in the prosecution of the campaign, but is rather contributory to the main end, which is advance against the enemy. Volunteers are enlisted to fight, and incidentally they are assured that they will be fed. The one who refuses to fight will very soon find himself cut off from the privileges of the trench kitchen. An army travels upon its stomach, but the traveling is the essential feature, and the stomach is cultivated to that end. The propaganda of many a church reminds one of those alluring enlistment pictures we used formerly to see which told of the soldier's pay, the good time he was going to have,

the countries he would see. But it is improbable that this method has ever secured the enlistment of any great number of desirable recruits.

Christian inertia.—The great call to the battle is the call to sacrifice for a great cause, and the men of today are not wanting in the heroic element which responds to such an appeal. Is it not possible that the inertia of the average Christian is due to a fundamental misapprehension upon uniting with the church? He was impressed with the peace, joy, and comfort which church membership would mean to him, and little was said of the active battle which the church is waging against the entrenched forces of evil in the world, and of the solemn obligation he was taking of engaging earnestly in the strife. Hence he unites with the church obsessed with the belief that his churchly duty lies in faithfully occupying his pew Sunday by Sunday, while the pastor earnestly distributes the weekly supply of spiritual food.

A nest of swallows.—I am reminded of a nest of young swallows which we once observed through a period of weeks. The parent birds had built their nest under the eaves of a tiny Japanese house in Yokohama. We were guests in the home of a missionary who lived on the summit of the bluff. Descending the long flight of steps which led to the native city, we came upon this nest of little fledglings. The Japanese who occupied the house were evidently very kind to the little birds and got into the way of dropping small pieces of food into the hungry mouths. The birds became so accustomed to this treatment that they began to expect it,

and upon the approach of a footstep, open would go every mouth, the jaws stretched to such a voracious extent that they seemed indeed all mouth.

A Sunday congregation.—It has often occurred to me that this is a pretty fair picture of the average Sunday morning congregation. The pews are filled with decorous churchgoers, the pastor has prepared his very best for them and is ready to give of his brain, his private study of the Word, his erudition and ripe experience of contact with human life. He enters the pulpit and, at least metaphorically, open goes every mouth, and the birds are awaiting the choice morsel which he has laboriously prepared for their nutriment. But normally this feeding process is not perpetual. There comes a time when, if the little fledglings do not make an effort to fly, the mother-bird will shoulder them out of the nest and they will be left to shift for themselves.

Sermon-tasters.—The capacity to receive prepared food, which a great many Christians manifest, is little short of marvelous. They are fully content to sit Sunday after Sunday complacently awaiting the ministrations of their spiritual wet-nurse, and the various comments upon the discourse will indicate a very nice and critical taste. They become capable of intelligently criticizing the ablest sermonizers of the land. These are they who, when a church is without a pastor, make it well-nigh impossible for more honest souls to fill the vacant place. They have become what is known as "sermon-tasters" and can find something to criticize unfavorably in the most able discourse.

An anemic soul.—There are three terrible spiritual illnesses which affect those who achieve the pernicious habit of constantly hearing the Word without an earnest effort to obey it. Assimilation may fail and they may die of inanition or anemia. There will be manifest a gradual loss of appetite, failure to attend the services, weakness of response to the stimuli of the Christian faith, entire failure to participate in the activities of the church, finally loss of spiritual sensation, and death. What a large number of pale, anemic Christians there are in the church! They remind one of the delicate anemone trembling in the breeze, rather than the brilliant, ruddy poppy glorifying the landscape. They have no message of Christian hope and cheer for those without. They suffer, like all victims of anemia, from cold extremities, and lack that warmth of handclasp and virile Christian personality which is an invitation to feeble souls to seek the same source of spiritual vigor.

Auto-intoxication.—In the second case, the situation is closely analogous to a similar condition in the physical system of the human body. Overfeeding and under-activity induce a condition known as auto-intoxication. The body finds it impossible to dispose naturally of all the nutriment provided for it. Faulty metabolism results in the manufacture from the food of poisonous products which affect the body seriously in many ways, lessening efficiency, dulling the intellect, and producing a train of unhappy symptoms all too familiar to the chronic dyspeptic. In the spiritual realm, the law that food is given for the purpose of building the

body and furnishing power for work is enforced as inexorably as in the physical, and the Christian who constantly feeds but fails to work will inevitably suffer from a condition of spiritual auto-intoxication. The outraged system manufactures deadly poisons from the unused nutritive material, and we find developed peculiar forms of religious experience such as Christian Science, Dowieism, singular interpretations of prophecy, and the like.

Spiritual obesity.—The third evil which threatens the church member who fails to engage in definite and regular activity is over-production of adipose tissue. Nutritive material is provided to be transformed into the tissue of character and the energy of service. The violation of this law results in the deposit of the surplus of food about the spiritual anatomy, and the individual becomes a victim of spiritual obesity. His religion is an unctuous deposit beneath the surface of the skin, rather than the fabric of his soul's life. He is ready with the pious phraseology of a second-hand religion. His prayers are in the set terms of the spiritual experience of others. He goes through the motions of Christian service without putting the force of his spiritual life behind them. In the physical realm, the over-production of fat may involve danger to the very life of the individual. The fat cells not only accumulate beneath the skin, but infiltrate the substance of the cardiac muscle, so that every heartbeat requires the lifting of pounds of useless tissue. So the platitudes of habitual piety may lie about the heart of the spirit, weighing it down like the millstone of which the Master spoke.

The way to avoid all this is very simple. Let nutrition be followed by motion. Use to the utmost extent the aliment received in the development of character and in active service. This is the pathway of health. The two walk hand in hand: food and exercise.

A first-class egoist.—The rudimentary activities of the protozoan which are expressed in simple movements of its "false limbs" become in the highly differentiated life of the human being the manifold activities made possible by the fine co-ordination of the groups of well-developed muscles with which the latter's real limbs are provided. The protozoan is a first-class egoist. All its activities are grouped about the necessity for supplying its own bodily wants.

The element of altruism.—But in the physical development of the human the altruistic element has been added, and while much of his activity has to do with the supply of his own personal need, nevertheless there has appeared a relationship to the need of others, and his chief activity may indeed center about the wants of some other creature. Pursuing the same idea into the spiritual realm, the chief end of activity is found to have lost its egoistic features, and the spirit labors not for its own preservation but vicariously for the life and safety of others. True it is that the individual's life and growth depend intimately upon motion, even in the spirit-life, but Christian service does not consist in a series of spiritual gymnastics for the purpose of strengthening the muscles of the soul. It is rather the spontaneous outgoing of the inner life in an effort to develop within others the same spiritual vigor in which it rejoices.

Dumb Christians.—It is a common phenomenon in our churches today to observe members in "good and regular standing" who, so far as any active Christian service is concerned, seem to be entirely devoid of fruit. They are like those naked poles which sometimes rear themselves in the midst of a bamboo thicket, leafless and bare among the group of foliage-adorned trunks. In the Philippines these leafless trunks are called *caña muda*, "dumb bamboo"—an accurate picture of the "dumb Christian." It is not always true, however, that spiritual desire has died out of such hearts. It is sometimes the case that they have failed to grasp what Christian service means and do not know how to go about the task of expressing their own spiritual lives in active service. Just as the keynote of Christian activity, as distinguished from motion of other sorts, is altruism, so the spirit must comprehend the life and needs of others before it can actively express itself in supplying those needs.

Put yourself in his place.—There is only one way whereby one may enter into another's necessity, and that is by projecting one's own spirit into the life and surroundings of his brother. To consider the circumstances of another as though they were our own is the method which will enable us to do Christian service effectively, and thus the function of imagination again enters into our thinking as the active agent whereby we may comprehend another's need, place ourselves in his situation, and help him solve the problem of his own difficult circumstances and environment. It is utterly futile to expect to affect another by anything short of a

real study of his need and a sympathetic effort to range one's self alongside of him in the bearing of his burden.

Comprehension through the imagination.—This is the truest kind of spiritual activity, and its active agent is again, as in the case of nutrition, the pseudopodium of the soul, imagination. Really to grasp another's need by means of the imagination, one must needs make a deliberate effort, get outside of one's self and live for others. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself." It is the crucial point where many fail, and often the failure is due to the fact that the Christian has not realized that the whole end of his being is service, or, realizing this, has failed to grasp the fact that the method of Christian service is the consecration of the imagination to a comprehension of the whole life of the needy brother, a self-giving which shall result in the highest degree of self-realization. "He that loseth his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall keep it unto life eternal." "If it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

The soul's activities.—The physiology of the soul's activities may be summed up thus: No soul can engage in active Christian service unless it is receiving regular and sufficient nourishment. Food is taken, not for personal satisfaction, but for character-building and service. Service involves a sympathetic comprehension of the need of others by the outreach of the imagination into their life and circumstances. The robust soul is the one which feeds daily upon the words of the Master, and brings to others the same blessing and help which these words have brought to him.

IV. REPRODUCTION

Hating one's life and keeping it.—The protozoan more nearly approaches the altruistic principle of self-giving in the function of reproduction than in any other way, and even here the gospel principle of self-realization through self-denial is demonstrated. "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." The perpetuity of the species depends upon the inexorable law whereby the individual parts with a portion of its life to bring about the life of another.

The pain of reproduction.—It is probable that reproduction is always associated with pain. What rudimentary discomfort the simple cell undergoes in the process of reproducing its kind we may not know, but it is not difficult to imagine that the pinching of its protoplasm and the contraction of its cell-substance as the projection from its body becomes more and more pronounced may be anything but a pleasant process; and when the supreme moment comes for the division of that tenuous ligament, still joining the newly forming organism to its parent-cell, it is not perhaps calling too freely upon the imagination to believe that the protoplasm of the cell-body feels the keen stab of a momentary anguish as the final shreds are torn asunder and the little new life embarks upon its own career.

A world-process.—What a conception of the universe this gives us! The suffering of a myriad infinitesimal pains as minute lives emerge moment by moment through all the world! And these birth pangs are accentuated according to the

rise of the individual in the scale of development. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

The upward trend of the pathway of pain.—But the complementary truth brings a balm for the suffering which renders it a bitter-sweet experience more to be desired than any other on earth. The gropings of the soul into the future and all the hidden potentialities which prophesy of better days to come; higher grades of personal development, nobler social organization, the elimination of the faulty and unfit, are bound up together with this pathway of pain.

The amoeba's prophecy.—The travailing amoeba may not translate its rudimentary cerebration into active consciousness, but doubtless there is an instinctive impulse of its being which bids it reach out and beyond itself in the divine attribute of new life-creation; and the urging of its granules toward the accomplishment of this, its highest function, is its primal prophecy of ultimate perfection.

The spiritual element in birth pangs.—The experience is universal and runs through all animate nature. The Master voiced it when He said, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, but afterward she remembereth no more her sorrow for joy that a man is born into the world." From creation until now there has been a spiritual element in the pangs of childbirth, expressed in the possibility which lay in the background of every Jewish maiden's thinking that "the man born into the world" may be the Son of Man who shall achieve

the world's redemption. And with the coming of the Son of Man the hope became but more inclusive, in that through Him divine potentialities are seen to lie in *every* frail life which comes to us out of the unknown. The humility of Elizabeth was shown in her words, "Whence is this that the mother of my Lord should come unto me," but beneath the real humility there was a proud consciousness that she also was to give life to one who should be the forerunner of the Lord and have part in changing world-currents and uplifting the race of men.

The best fruitage of the spiritual life.—Translated into the spiritual realm, service becomes truly divine and creative when it has to do with the reproductive faculty. To implant the divine life within the soul of any man is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit alone, but in carrying out the process God has chosen to make use of the word and ministry of His servants, and the spiritual life of any man finds its blossom and fruitage in the highest of all forms of service—spiritual reproduction.

The superlative of self-giving.—Let it be noted from the analogy of all nature that this high function of the human spirit cannot be accomplished without pain. It is the principle of self-giving raised to the highest degree. The Master referred to this when He said, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone" (John 12:24). In some measure reproduction exacts the suffering and death of the parent-organism, and those who refuse to pay the price in deliberate self-abandonment remain like the sterile grain of wheat upon the shelf, barren and forsaken, abiding alone.

Flouting nature.—One of the most pitiable sights upon the face of the earth is the barren individual, and one of the ugliest phenomena of the present-day ultra-civilization is threatened race-suicide, wherever it may be found. It amounts to a stultification of one's own being—a denial of the fundamental good attaching to every existing organism. It flouts nature to her face and says in effect, "Yes, indeed, personally I exist, but I place so little value upon existence that by my example I would advocate that my species perish from the face of the earth with the closing of my own miserable life." The barren individual in any order of life is a freak and a monstrosity, its saving grace being that it cannot reproduce its degenerate nature.

The barren Christian.—But what of the barren Christian who fails to reproduce his spiritual kind? A terrible menace to the life of the church is the prevalence of those who are willing to browse in the pastures of the blest, perchance to perform perfunctory duties connected with the routine of church life, but who fail at the crucial point of permitting God to make use of them in imparting to others the divine life of which they have been made partakers.

Reproduction a complex process.—The production of new spiritual life is a complex process. It is probable that in very few cases is it given to an individual to initiate and bring to its conclusion that chain of circumstances and impulses which eventually results in soul-awakening. It is infinitely true of the whole matter that Paul plants, Apollos waters, but it is God who gives the increase. In many a case the early

influence of a mother's faithful words and prayer will lie dormant for years, to be awakened to active life by the incisive message from pulpit or pew in later years.

Christ's pre-eminent message.—The rediscovery of Christ's pre-eminent message to the church, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," has given rise in these days to the definite conscious movement for reproduction of the spiritual life in the soul of every man throughout the entire world, and this is comprehended in the modern missionary movement.

Co-operative reproduction.—The reaction in this case is an especially complicated one. Its conception is in the heart of the man with the broad world-vision; it involves the co-operative movement of hundreds and thousands of the Master's followers, under the leadership of those who have been given a realization of the capabilities of divine sonship in peoples of alien race, far removed geographically from the parent-group. It requires organization, transportation, a physical plant, wise planning, and imaginative outreach. And back of it earnest souls give loyal co-operation in large faith and sacrificial offering.

The magic of money.—The magic of money is involved in it. We should entirely divest ourselves of the feeling that there is anything unspiritual about this phase of the church's great reproductive function. The term "filthy lucre" becomes a misnomer when applied to the crystallized and minted powers of God's people. It is the concrete product of brain and brawn, outlook, daring, energy, patience, perseverance, and toil. Brought to the Master's service, it

becomes an essential element in that great incubative process which is to result, not in the transplanting of the mother-church abroad, but in the creation of an indigenous Christian body in far lands. Let us call it "sainted" rather than "tainted" money.

Travail associated with every step.—And about all these various elements in the life-producing process there exists that travail which is the purchase-price of the rare treasure of new life. The vision in the heart of him who conceives a foreign mission is the same as that of Him who "so loved the world that He gave. . . ." The details of organization and equipment which require adjustment and counteradjustment, sacrifice here and self-giving there, are burdened all along the way with the travail of men and women who carry the service as a labor of love. The actual money which forms the vehicle for transmission of the vital impulse is freighted with the prayer-expressed desire amounting in multitudes of cases to definite soul-travail for other spirits whose lives are being lived in far-distant lands and among far different environments.

A natural phenomenon.—Response to the stimulus of world-vision is a natural phenomenon in the Christian life. It could not well be otherwise. The Master's mission was life-imparting: "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." It was world-wide in its scope and embraced "every man that cometh into the world." Ours is identical: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The anti- or non-missionary Christian, therefore, is an anomaly. The world-wide missionary enterprise is a phase of

co-operative Christian reproduction, and the so-called Christian who has no personal and financial relation to it is sterile. He is a drone in the world-hive, doomed to extinction.

A whole-hearted response.—Nor may the true follower of the Master bear a mere nominal relationship to the cause. Great causes should elicit no half-hearted service. It is a current theory that the missionary call comes to a few elect souls of peculiar piety. Such a theory violates the biological basis of the spiritual life. We are impelled by the nature of our being to the largest self-development. This means the investment of our powers in the place of greatest need.

The first question.—The first question, then, for the Christian who feels within himself the reproducing impulse is, "Where is the greatest need?" And having decided, as a candid study of world-conditions must lead one to decide, that it lies among those seething millions of the oriental races whose ethnic religions have lost all trace of spiritual life and power, the next logical question is, "Am I fitted to go, physically, educationally, spiritually?" If so, the loyal response of the loving heart brings yet another recruit to the forces of the great enterprise.

The man who cannot go.—But if providential circumstances, in social connection, physical or mental equipment, or otherwise should render it impossible, this does not render barren the individual life as regards the great co-operative world-reproductive function. The logic of the situation leads the honest Christian much farther, and the next question naturally arises, "Are

there ways in which I can project my own life into those places of need today, while prevented from personally going?" And the reply is obvious. One man gives life—another must give money. They are equally needed links in the chain of circumstances leading to the production of the new life abroad.

How little may I give?—Nor will the healthy Christian ask himself the question, "How little may I give and satisfy my conscience?" but the impelling force within which governs the instinct of self-propagation will lead him to place his resources as fully at the command of the Master as his brother who goes, and he will live a life at home which is such that, while his personal service is exerted in his own sphere for the purpose of implanting the life of Christ in individuals, his crystallized powers in the form of financial aid are devoted entirely, beyond the common needs of his daily life and of those who are dependent upon him, to this other form of reproduction which may be called co-operative, in that it involves the joint efforts of thousands of his fellows, and thus he becomes just as truly a missionary—even a foreign missionary—as his brother whose sphere is abroad.

The prodigality of nature.—In no other manifestation of life is nature so prodigal as in connection with the reproductive function. Limitless potentialities are bound up in the individual. The simple cell may divide and redivide endlessly, the single seed will bring forth some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold. Nature has lavished bountiful riches upon both vegetable and animal worlds in an apparent determination to secure the perpetuity of the

species. So in the spiritual world vigorous souls beget their kind in an unending succession, and besides the intricate series of interrelationships and extended impulses which carry on the co-operative reproductive function of the church life—the great missionary enterprise—are those personal contacts of soul with soul in which life passes from one to another.

Reaching the individual.—It is the obligation and high privilege of every Christian not only to have part in the great world-enterprises which involve co-operative work with his fellow-Christians but also so to place himself under the guidance of the spirit of God that he may be used to help in implanting the life of Christ in the hearts of those other individuals with whom his immediate environment brings him in personal contact.

Spiritual sonship.—One may never know all the factors which have entered into the rebirth of any single soul, but most regenerated men bear the definite relationship of spiritual sonship to some other who has made their salvation a matter of special solicitude and prayer.

Forming Christ in others.—This phase of spiritual reproduction is not brought about without the pangs of soul-travail. "My little children," writes Paul, "of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." It was of serious concern to him that the Christ-life should be truly reproduced in his followers, so much so that he even goes so far as almost to wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. Surely this is the true spirit of parenthood, which is willing in giving life to a new spirit to impart its own soul also,

if by so doing the normal development of the other may be secured.

The part of the imagination.—Here again the consecrated Christian imagination is seen to play a very special part. It is the pseudopodium of the soul, and its outreach makes possible both the collective reproductive activity of the church life in its great missionary enterprises and the personal self-projection of the individual's own understanding of Christ. Who has ever found himself actively interested in penetrating the great world-fields with Christian truth until his imagination has grasped the tremendous need of a Christless social system and until his mental processes have gripped the situation and enabled him in some sense at least to identify himself with those who "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death"? The true supporter of missions, by his imagination, is made partaker of the very nature of those he would help, so that he may bring many sons into glory through a realization of their needs and possibilities.

A tender sympathy.—Equally he who would affect those about him and lead them to Christ must get out of himself, use his imagination, and thus form the living link between their situation of need and the One who can satisfy that need. A tender sympathy which leads one to understand the heart of the one who is sought is a prime requisite for winning men to a new life.

The exultation of soul-birth.—There is exultation about the moment of soul-birth. No greater joy can come to a human heart than that of ushering into the Kingdom of Heaven a new life which otherwise might have remained outside

those gates of light. The Master coveted the experience for all of His followers. "I have ordained you that ye should go and bring forth." Paul saw the pre-eminent joy of it: "That ye be neither barren nor unfruitful."

The crown of life.—To exercise the reproductive function is without doubt the very crown and fulfilment of life. The functions of nutrition and motion are merely preliminary and introductory

to the great end of being, which is to pass on to other organisms the fulness of life with all its countless possibilities, that they in their turn may continue the process of multiplication. No true Christian may ever count his life complete until he has had part in this great crowning glory of the spiritual life. "Children are an heritage of the Lord. . . . Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them."

V. CIRCULATION AND RESPIRATION

Higher physiological processes.—There are certain physiological processes which are the product of much higher stages of differentiation than are found in the simple cell, and as the spiritual life is highly organized we must seek beyond the amoeba for the similitude of some of its functions. This is especially true of respiration and circulation. These functions combine the processes whereby the outside atmosphere is brought into vital relationship with the tissues of the body.

"*God is round about us.*"—The analogy of both respiration and circulation are more than hinted at in the Scriptures. "In him we live and move and have our being" is a direct picture of the soul running its happy course, exercising its God-given powers, and finding its source of life in God as an all-surrounding, all-permeating atmosphere. Truly "He is not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? . . . If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me" (Ps. 139:7-10).

The all-sustaining element.—Physiology teaches us the intimate dependence of animal life upon the surrounding atmosphere. The fundamental basis of this dependence is the need for the life-sustaining element, oxygen, which the atmosphere imparts to the living organism. Entering the system, the oxygen forms a biochemical combination with certain elements of the blood; it is carried by the circulation through the remotely ramifying system of arteries and capillaries to the ultimate component cells of the body, where it is seized with avidity by the oxygen-hungry tissues and compounded into the substance of the system. Here, in the remote chemical laboratory of the individual cell, wherein inheres the essence of life, it becomes the prime factor in those metabolic changes, some of which we understand well, while others are shrouded in the mystery of nature's magic alchemy, whereby is carried forward the miracle of sustaining and ever-renewing life.

The atmosphere of the soul.—In the profoundest possible sense God is the atmosphere of the soul. That elixir of

eternal life, which the alchemists of old so vainly sought, is found in Him alone. There is a principle of the divine nature, call it what you will, which when apprehended by the soul of man becomes to the spirit-life precisely what oxygen is to the physical organism. The Master well understood this when He prayed for His disciples that they might know Him Whom to know is life eternal. The psalmist goes almost so far as to describe the biological process when he exclaims in sublime expression of keenest soul-desire, "*My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*" It is the miracle of divine incarnation repeated, that God should come into the human soul, forming not a bio-chemical, but a bio-spiritual union with the spiritual elements of man's being.

Telegraphing to headquarters.—There is a sensitive spot at the base of the human brain where are registered the impulses which indicate whether the tissues are sufficiently oxygenated. When the blood has been so robbed of its oxygen by the clamant calls of the body-cells as no longer to be capable of oxygenating the tissues, its venous character impresses upon this spot the vital need of the system. Instantly the mechanism of demand and supply is set in motion; a telegraphic impulse is flashed to the respiratory and circulatory apparatus. The heart beats more forcefully and the lungs expand more completely so that the vital fluids are reoxygenated as they come in contact with the atmospheric air through the tenuous medium of the pulmonary membrane. Is not the psalmist expressing the same spiritual process in the verse we have just quoted: "*My heart*

and my flesh cry out for the living God"? The whole spiritual man feels the impelling need of the vitalizing power of God's presence, and the insistent appeal expresses itself through the medium of exclamatory prayer: "Oh, that I knew where I might find him" (Job 23:3). "When shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42:2).

A permanent function.—The Master's teaching exalts this experience which was apparently only occasional in the life of the Old Testament saints, as it is indeed in that of many Christians today, into a permanent function which should be considered normal to the soul and without which no soul can possess a true state of health.

The circulation of the vine.—He speaks of it under the term of "abiding" and carries out the principle of the circulation by the figure of the vine and the branches. The branch whose health is normal and which bears much fruit is the one which abides in the vine. Those vessels which unite it with the life of the parent-vine are open and free and the vital fluids of the trunk pass uninterruptedly. For a normal life of growth and fruit-bearing there must be more than an occasional transmission of sap from the trunk to the branch. From the very beginning of its existence as a branch it must be so intimately united to the vine that vessel joins vessel and the circulation of the vital fluids is unimpaired. Even a partial separation of the branch from the trunk will render impossible the entire fulfilment of its highest promise in the line of fruit-bearing.

Mutual indwelling.—The Master goes on to elaborate the relationship. "If

ye abide in me and I in you." Not only must the branch retain the integrity of its union with the trunk, but constantly there must be the passage of life-elements in the form of nutritive fluids from the trunk to the branch. The branch is wrought into the intimate substance of the vine, fiber embracing fiber and vessel meeting vessel, while the life-essence of the vine itself is found in all its power and fulness rushing through the veins of the branch and bursting into leaf, flower, tendril, and fruit. Each abides within the other and the perfect plant meets perfectly its divinely appointed use.

The circulation in man.—The circulation of plant life is not essentially dissimilar to that of the human system. In the latter, connection is made between the current of vital fluids within the system and the encircling atmosphere without through the medium of the lungs, where the blood is brought into intimate approach to the air by the pulmonary tissues. It snatches the oxygen from the air circulating in the pulmonary cells and thus a continuous current of revivifying air is carried through the entire system, uniting the remotest cell of the body with that great ocean of oxygen-imparting atmosphere without.

Respiration.—The function of respiration may not and must not be an interrupted one. "If He gather unto Himself his breath, all flesh shall perish together" (Job 34:14, 15). So with abiding, the very life of the Christian depends upon the maintenance of the union between himself and God. The entire cutting off of this connection could only result in the death of the

severed member. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6).

Air hunger.—It must be recognized, however, that while the connection between the all-embracing spirit-life and the spiritual circulation of the individual may not be entirely suspended, it is frequently very greatly impaired. The phenomenon of air hunger is very common among God's children. How frequently the symptoms of this condition in the physical nature are found among those who dwell in crowded tenements. It is different from malnutrition due to insufficient feeding, although its results are somewhat similar and the two are frequently found to coexist. Air hunger will produce a condition of nervous tension and irritability. There is a pinched appearance to the face, the lips and finger nails are blue, and the extremities cold, the disposition is likely to be fretful, and the outlook upon life is pessimistic.

Christians who lack air.—Similar symptoms are all too common in the life of many Christians. They are pinched and narrow in their views. Though active in Christian work, they lack the broad, happy, human sympathy which makes effective their approach to other lives. Their spiritual experience is turbulent. Today they may be rejoicing in the light of a new spiritual uplift, while tomorrow they are depressed and restless, with face expressing all too clearly the dis-ease of their inner experience. Air hunger in the spiritual life comes from an imperfect union of the soul with God.

A noxious atmosphere.—The Master has offered us the privilege of a life of uninterrupted union with Himself, and if such symptoms present themselves, we should scrutinize carefully our own hearts to discover the cause of the imperfect union. It may be because we are living in an atmosphere surcharged with poisonous products. No one can exist permanently in a noxious atmosphere loaded with the deleterious products of other organisms which have exhausted the oxygen of the atmosphere and cast their own poisonous exhalations upon the air. How quickly clear thought and inspiration fail in a crowded church when the windows are closed. We must escape to the open spaces where God's clear air comes to us fresh and invigorating from the sweep of open country or ocean waste.

The cause of imperfect abiding.—The great cause of imperfect abiding in the Christian life is living too much in the presence of our fellows and too little in the presence of God. "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11). Health and perfect physical development are not found by constant residence among the crowds. Nor will that individual whose life is crowded perpetually with complex sense-impressions and multitudinous human contacts, whose ears are dinned with ceaseless voices and whose vision is confused by constant gazing at the passing of the world-throng, develop an inner life of abiding peace and soul-health.

A glorious possibility.—But the glorious thing about the life of abiding is that spiritually we are always able to

disentangle ourselves from the insistent presence of physical impressions and seek those uplands where our spirits may bathe in the ozone of God's boundless life. Deep into the intricacies of our spirit we may draw the living breath of His being until the heart of our soul responds by a deep steady pulse-beat which draws His imparted life through the arteries and veins of our spiritual nature until every farthest cell has caught its full burden of divine life; and, washed in the oxygen of God's nature, every fiber of our spirit gives fresh and normal response to the stimulus of the Great Spirit.

En rapport with the Master.—Soul-health is not dependent upon the external environment of our lives. One swift upward glance to the throne out of the mirk of the day's strife will serve to put us *en rapport* with the Master. One deep breath of God's spirit as we lift our souls above the day's toil will fill our whole spirit with Him Who breathed the breath of life into man and said, "It is good." And then underneath the eddying currents of life's resistless stream will continue that constant flow of the subconscious, carrying the main forces of our lives in the direction of God's life. The innumerable details of the busy day will touch the surface only, while the great undercurrent of the subconscious will maintain that high union of the spirit with God; and just as the functions of respiration and circulation are carried on beneath the threshold of the conscious life, so apart from our conscious thinking our spirits, having once consciously sought the free breezes of "the heavenlies," will continue subconsciously that process

of receiving Him Whose words alone are spirit and life. The life of one who has definitely sought and found such an experience as this will be governed by such a deep and abiding peace that the ordinary cares and troubles of life will not ruffle the calm of his spirit, and even the deep waters of affliction will not disturb the peace of his soul.

An experience of continued heart-rest.—
Let us be assured that such an experience

of continued heart-rest is not beyond any one of us. It belongs indeed to the normal and healthy soul. Nor can we any more expect to maintain a healthy body while breathing into our system vitiated air, deficient in the life-sustaining element oxygen than to maintain soul-health while failing to maintain that spiritual circulation of the life of God within and without which comes to us from abiding union with Him.

(To be concluded)

THE RELIGION OF A LAYMAN

A STUDY OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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I. THE MAIN SOURCES OF HAPPINESS

The Master began to teach in a little synagogue at Nazareth. Then he appeared in the larger temple at Jerusalem. Here he stands on a mountainside under the open sky. He enlarged his audience room as the scope of his own message broadened.

He saw before him a multitude. It was just a plain ordinary crowd, such as one might see on the Fourth of July or Labor Day, an acre or two of human beings massed together. The rich and the poor were there, drawn by a common curiosity to see this teacher of religion from Nazareth, the cultured and the simple, the successes and the failures—they were all there. And the very sight of them with the unsatisfied longings in their hearts appealed to the Master like

a cry in the night. It was the appeal of life in the mass and he promptly met it with the best he had. He opened his mouth and out came the Sermon on the Mount.

He saw that all those people wanted one thing—they wanted to be happy. But the great majority of them were faced in the wrong direction. They were looking in the wrong places and they would not find happiness because it was not there. He therefore showed them where to look—he faced them rightabout. It is significant that the first word in the Sermon on the Mount is the word “happy.” It is translated “blessed” in the stiffer and more formal language of the King James’s version, but the earlier and simpler meaning of